THE HUMAN TORCH

10¢

NO. 21

WINTER ISSUE

COMICS

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THE HUMAN TORCH

DEATH WRITES A DIARY!

People call me Snowball, and there never was a man more aptly named. All my life I have sought a glacial paradise, where cold and ice reign supreme. All my life I have fought with and nail against my natural enemies... Heat and fire! But it is only now that I can tell for the first time my true story... in this, the tale of...

MARCH 2, 1945
I can't stand it... HEAT!! Hours, days...a whole lifetime of choking, torturing heat. But soon... soon, I shall be free!

HERE IN MY DIARY IS THE DAY-TO-DAY RECORD OF MY STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WORLD! WHY, THIS VERY FIRST ENTRY SHOWED I WAS SUPERIOR TO ANY OTHER CHILD!

JANUARY 2, 1877
This morning, mom caut me playing outside in the snow in my pajamas...

COME IN HERE THIS MINUTE! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A CHILD!

WHEE! THIS IS FUN!

Boy did I get a lickin!

A LICKING WASN'T THE ONLY THING I GOT. FROM THAT TIME ON, I HAD A NEW NICKNAME--SNOW-BALL! AND I MADE THAT NAME FAMOUS! I DIDN'T REALLY GET STARTED UN-TIL I WAS 47, THEN...

JUNE 15, 1921
Unbearably hot today.. Had to sit on a cake of ice... and it cost me my job!

I DECLARE, YOU'VE BEEN OUT THERE A HALF HOUR MELTING THE ICE I PAID FOR!...I'LL REPORT YOU TO THE ICE COMPANY!

WHO CARES? IT'S TOO HOT TO WORK!

NOVEMBER 27, 1941
Today I lost my second job... Nobody understands me!

WHAT? IN THE COLD ROOM AGAIN? SNOW-BALL--YOU'RE FIRED!

OKAY! BUT I WARN YOU, SOMEDAY YOU'LL BE SORRY!

JULY 3, 1943
Today I lost my job as bank teller! The air conditioning went on the blink...and so did I!

SHOCKING!

GET OUT OF HERE, YOU IDIOT!

HEAT! I CAN'T TAKE IT...NOT FAIR, BUT I'LL SHOW YOU!

SEPTEMBER 9, 1944
Today I got a job in Hollywood, the city of overnight riches, as snow-effects man for Sensational Studios, at $250 a week. At last my genius is appreciated!

BOY! WHAT A JOB.. WHAT A JOB! JUST THE TEMPERATURE MY BODY CRAVES!

I'VE BEEN SO BUSY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE FILMING! BETTER HAVE A LOOK BEFORE THEY MOVE OVER ON TO MY SET!

...When I saw what the set-up was, I almost keeled over!

TERRIFIC! THE HISTORY OF FIRE... STARRING TORCH AND TORO! IT'S THE GREATEST STORY EVER FILMED!

FIRE! THE HISTORY OF FIRE!

I guess I went a little crazy because...

YIII! THE HUMAN TORCH AND TORO! THEY STAND FOR EVERYTHING I HATE MOST IN THE WORLD!

HEAT! FIRE! I'LL SHOW THEM!

HEY! WHAT GIVES?

SEARCH ME, TORO...IT'S NOT IN THE SCRIPT!

MY PICTURE RUINED.... ..(SOB)!

HA, HA, HA! I, SNOWBALL, HAVE DEMONSTRATED ICE AND SNOW ARE STRONGER THAN FIRE!

WHEW, WHO LET THIS NUT OUT OF THE ICEBOX?

YOU'RE FIRED! YOU -- YOU LUNATIC!

ME, CRAZY? I'M ALL RIGHT... EVERYBODY ELSE IS CRAZY IN THIS OVEN OF A WORLD!

As I started to leave, Torch and Toro caught up with me and wanted to help me...!

GET AWAY FROM ME! I DON'T WANT YOUR HELP! SCRAM!

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE IS WRONG WITH HIM, TORCH?

WE'LL ASK THE DIRECTOR! THEY PROBABLY HAVE HIS HISTORY ON THEIR EMPLOYMENT RECORDS!

THEY HEARD ABOUT MY PAST ALL RIGHT -- BUT IT WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS.... FROM THEN ON, I WAS JUST OUT FOR REVENGE AND I GOT IT!

MY DIARY

OCTOBER 2, 1944
Today I visited the Ice Company that once fired me...

NO, I HAVEN'T GOT THE SAFE COMBINATION!

MAYBE DRY ICE UNDER YOUR FEET WILL REFRESH YOUR MEMORY!

PRES.

YOU FIRED ME... I'LL FREEZE YOU! HA-HA!

EEEOW! I CAN'T STAND IT!

NOVEMBER 5, 1944
Today I struck again... I visited the head waiter who fired me...

YOU'RE THE KITCHEN BOY I FIRED!

YEAH, AND I TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T FORGET-- REMEMBER?

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT!

...And killed him with my ice gun...

AAAAGH!

MAY 16, 1945
Today I staged another holdup using my hand organ... It really is a powerful freezing machine!!

BANK

LOOK! IT'S- SNOWBALL!

BREAK THESE WINDOWS BE- FORE EVERY- ONE FREEZES TO DEATH!

THEY'RE WISE TO ME, BUT I'M READY FOR 'EM-- I'LL MAKE FOR THE CAR PRONTO!

SOMETHING TELLS ME WE SHOULD HAVE NAILED THIS GUY BACK ON THE SENSATIONAL LOT!

WE'LL GET HIM YET... AND WHEN WE DO, HE'S GOING TO END UP IN A VERY HOT PLACE!

They reached the car and I let 'em have it!!!

WATCH OUT, TORO--THAT VAPOR!!

(COUGH, COUGH) IT'S PUTTING OUR FLAMES OUT!

TOO BAD--BUT AT LEAST WE KNOW HOW HE OPERATES!

YEAH! ACCORDING TO HIS RECORD, HE OUGHT TO BE OUT TO GET BOTH US AND SENSATIONAL STUDIOS NEXT!

AH, MY PRECIOUS FIREBUGS! IF YOU ONLY KNEW WHAT I HAVE IN STORE FOR YOU! TO-MORROW, SNOWBALL STRIKES AGAIN!

MAY 17--1943
Today, I kidnapped Sensational's famous Ice Skater, Tina Svenka...

VERY INGENIOUS... SUFFOCATION INDUCED BY DRY ICE GASES! TINA WILL BE VERY QUIET UNTIL I REACH MY DESTINATION!

MAYBE THOSE TWO FIRE BUGS DIDN'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I'D STRIKE NEXT, BUT IF THEY'RE AS SMART AS I THINK THEY ARE, THEY'LL FOLLOW MY TRAIL RIGHT INTO A PERFECT TRAP!

When the girl came to...

WHAT? WHERE AM I?

KIDNAPPED, MY DEAR! FOR RANSOM AND BAITING A TRAP! BUT NOW I MUST WATCH TWO CLEVER GENTLEMEN AT WORK!

HE MUST BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD--THERE'S HIS LIMOUSINE!

SURE... BUT SAY, THAT FURNACE SHOP... DO YOU SUPPOSE..?

AH, NOW THEY'RE COOKING WITH GAS... AS THE SAYING GOES!

FURNACES

NOS

IT WON'T TAKE THEM LONG NOW, AND THEN I CAN CLIMAX MY BRILLIANT CRIME CAREER!

Before very long...

THERE HE IS, TORCH... SNOWBALL... IN PERSON!

YEAH, THE HUMAN ICICLE!

AH, I SEE I HAVE CALLERS! WELCOME, GENTLEMEN!

COOL, ISN'T HE?

WE'LL MAKE HIM SQUIRM BEFORE WE'RE THROUGH WITH HIM!

OH, COME NOW, FRIENDS! LET'S TURN OFF THE HEAT, SHALL WE?

HEY! WHAT THE..

WE'RE SLIPPING, TORO!

I had them where I wanted them...

IN ANOTHER MINUTE, THE HUMAN TORCH AND TORO WILL BE JUST A COUPLE OF BRITTLE ICE STATUES!

READY, TORO?

GIVE HIM THE WORKS!

when suddenly, while my attention was focused on Tina...

ALL OF YOU **FROZEN STATUES**... BUT TINA, IMMORTALIZED IN ICE, GOES WITH ME TO THE FROZEN NORTH!

those two had a trick up their sleeve!

AT LAST, SNOWBALL ACHIEVES REVENGE! UH! THAT **HEAT**! I'M BURNING UP!

YOU SHOULD BE, SNOWBALL! THIS IS A LITTLE TRICK OF OURS CALLED A DIATHERMY MACHINE!

Diathermy Machines! I thought I'd die of the heat!

CAN'T STAND IT! THIS HEAT--IT'S AWFUL! TURN THAT MACHINE OFF!

GET SET, TORO! WE'VE FIDDLED AROUND LONG ENOUGH!

SEND HIM DOWN THE ALLEY, TORCH-- AND I THINK HE'LL SAY 'UNCLE'!

YIII!

STOP--ENOUGH! YOU'RE KILLIN' ME .... UGHH!

I was licked all right!

YES... I WAS LICKED BY THE HUMAN TORCH AND TORO... BAH! THEY WEREN'T REALLY CLEVER... I OUT-WITTED THEM TWICE.... AND I'D HAVE WON IF THEY HADN'T BEEN SO CONFOUNDED LUCKY!

IT WAS PURE LUCK THAT THEY CAUGHT ME--THE CLEVEREST OUTLAW THAT EVER PUT A MIND TO CRIME--EH? OH, IT'S YOU!

TIME'S UP, SNOWBALL! THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU!

ALL RIGHT, GUARD, LEAD ME TO YOUR PUNY PUNISHMENT--THE HOT SEAT! IT CAN'T BE ANY WORSE THAN THE HEAT I'VE SUFFERED ALL MY LIFE!

THERE HE GOES, TORCH!

WHAT AN IRONIC END FOR A CHARACTER LIKE SNOWBALL!

YES--HE MIGHT HAVE USED HIS UNIQUE TALENTS TO BENEFIT SOCIETY--BUT HE TOOK THE EASY WAY, TORO!

HMMM! SNOWBALL'S DIARY--THE AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF ONE OF THE COOLEST MURDERERS IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME!

"DEATH WRITES A DIARY"... A FITTING TITLE, ISN'T IT? AND I'LL MAKE THE LAST ENTRY NOW!

...But soon--I shall be free, free as I've never been as long as I can remember--Good-bye! Snowball

The End

THE HUMAN TORCH

IT ALL BEGINS WITH A PICTURE... A SIMPLE LANDSCAPE OF BRIGHT COLOR THAT BLAZES A GORY PATH, HIGHLIGHTING A PERILOUS TRAIL THE FAMED TWOSOME, **TORCH** AND **TORO**, TAKE TO UNRAVEL A SINISTER SCHEME, IN THE CASE OF "**THE HOUSE THAT CHANGED COLOR!**"

TORCH AND TORO ARE ON A VACATION AT THE SEA-SHORE...

GOSH, THERE'S ONE THING ABOUT A HOLIDAY. IT GETS A FELLOW LAZIER AND LAZIER. SAY, TORCH, AS YOU'VE SAID MANY TIMES, AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN CRIME DETECTION IS THAT OF OBSERVATION.

YES. YOU KNOW THE SEA COVE ART SHOP DOWN THE BEACH? THERE'S A PAINTING ON EXHIBIT OUTSIDE CALLED "COUNTRY HOUSE". DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT COLOR THE HOUSE IS?

SURE, I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY.. THE HOUSE IS YELLOW.

LAD, YOU ARE SLIPPING. THAT HOUSE IS PAINTED RED. AND TO PROVE IT, WE'LL GO OVER TO THE ART SHOP NOW!

WILL YOUR FACE BE RED, TORO, BECAUSE I KNOW THE HOUSE IS RED!

YOU'RE ALL OFF, TORCH! IT'S YELLOW. THE LAUGH'LL BE ON YOU!

THE PAIR PUT THEIR QUESTION TO THE PROPRIETOR...

"COUNTRY HOUSE"? THE HOUSE IS YELLOW.. I SOLD IT THIS MORNING.. DO YOU WISH TO SEE OTHER PAINTINGS?

OH, WE'RE NOT INTERESTED IN BUYING. WE CAME TO SETTLE AN ARGUMENT.

GULP!

OH, MR. WHITE ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THAT PAINTING?

VERY MUCH! IT'S A SALE. SEND IT TO MY HOUSE.

BUT I WAS SURE IT WAS *RED.*

THAT'S LYNN WHITE, THE NEWSPAPER MAN. HE'S BOUGHT SEVERAL HERE ALREADY... ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T LOOK AT SOME OF OUR SELECTIONS?

NO, THANKS.. COME ON, TORO.

AS THE DUO LEAVES THE SHOP A MOMENT LATER...

SOMEONE'S SHOT MR. WHITE!

BEHIND THOSE ROCKS, TORCH! COME ON!

OH!

CRACK!

IN FLASH SECONDS, THE HUMAN FIRE-BRANDS PURSUE A KILLER... WHILE POLICE CLOSE IN BELOW!

WHITE WAS DEAD WHEN WE GOT THERE! THERE GOES THE KILLER!

FURTHER UP, TORCH AND TORO ARE ABOUT TO CLOSE IN ON THE KILLER, WHEN CRAFTY HANDS SUDDENLY DISLODGE A BOULDER..AND...

HE STARTED A ROCK-SLIDE! IT'LL KILL THEM BELOW! QUICK, LAD!

FLAME-DARTS LASH OUT WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, STRIKING THE HURTLING ROCKS WITH INTENSE HEAT!

THANKS! WE'D HAVE BEEN KILLED IF YOU HAD-N'T MELTED THOSE ROCKS!

AND NOW WE STILL HAVE A KILLER TO ROUND UP!

NO USE! HE DISAPPEARED. THAT ROCK SLIDE GAVE HIM A CHANCE TO GET AWAY!

THAT ENDS OUR VACATION! WE'VE GOT A MURDER ON OUR HANDS...MMM... WE'LL HAVE A LOOK-SEE AT WHITE'S HOUSE!

LATER, AT THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE..

WE DON'T HAVE A CLUE. HE HAD BEEN A EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT DURING THE WAR.. THE ONLY THING WE CAN FIGURE IS HE MIGHT'VE BEEN DOING A STORY.

WE SEARCHED WHITE'S HOUSE. NO INDICATION HE WAS EVEN WORKING ON A STORY NOW.

WANTED

10,000

HIS TYPEWRITER WAS IN ITS CASE.. BUT HIS BANK-BOOK SHOWED VERY RECENT LARGE DEPOSITS. IF NOT FROM WORK, HE MUST HAVE OBTAINED THAT MONEY SOMEWHERE...WELL, WE'LL KEEP ON IT!

HOPE YOU TURN UP SOMETHING SOON, BOYS!

FUNNY... WE DIDN'T SEE ANY PAINTINGS AT WHITE'S HOUSE. RAMSEY SAID HE'D BEEN BUYING THEM. AND I STILL SAY THAT "COUNTRY HOUSE" PICTURE IS RED.

RAMSEY SAID IT WAS YELLOW SO I WAS RIGHT!

JOACQUILI PAINTED "COUNTRY HOUSE", SO WE'LL DROP IN TO SEE HIM... I FOUND OUT THAT HE LIVES HERE IN TOWN!

SHORT MINUTES LATER - AT JOACQUILI'S STUDIO...

TORO AND I HAVE A LITTLE BET ON ABOUT YOUR "COUNTRY HOUSE" PICTURE. WHAT COLOR DID YOU PAINT THE HOUSE?

GREY.

GREY!

LET'S HAVE THE LOW-DOWN! TOO MANY COLORS IN THIS! SOMETHING'S FISHY ABOUT THAT PICTURE!

I-I WAS THINKING OF ANOTHER PAINTING. OF COURSE.. THAT HOUSE IS YELLOW!

THOSE TWO ARE BE-COMING SUS-PICIOUS! AH, THE IRON SHIELD.

CRASHING SECOND LATER...

THAT PUTS THEM OUT.. WE HAVE TO SHOOT THEM!

NO, LET'S LOCK THEM IN THE SUIT OF ARMOR. THEY'LL SUFFOCATE TO DEATH!

CRASH!

SOON

NO AIR... CAN'T FLAME ENOUGH TO BURN THROUGH..

LET'S GO! WE'VE OUR 3 O'CLOCK APPOINTMENT!

IN THEIR TOMB OF PLATE ARMOR...

THESE ARMOR SUITS ARE MADE OF SEPA-RATE PARTS, PIECED TOGETHER.

WE'RE USING UP THE OXY-GEN.. FAST...

WE'LL BOTH PUSH AGAINST THE SIDE. IF WE CAN TOPPLE THIS OVER, ONE OF THOSE PARTS MIGHT COME UNDONE... LET'S PUSH... UMMPH!

MMMPH.. UGHH...

AS STRONG MUSCLES TUG MIGHTILY, THE MAN-SIZED METAL CASEMENT BEGINS TO TOPPLE OVER...

A HAND'S SNAPPED OFF!

CRASH!

AIR, SWIFTLY FILTERING IN RESTORES THE FLAME POTENCY OF THE PEERLESS PAIR!

JOACQUILI AND RAMSEY SAID THEY HAD AN APPOINTMENT. IT COULD MEAN THEY'VE GONE BACK TO THE SHOP.. BUT LET'S LOOK AROUND FIRST...

A MEMO - AND THIS IS IT! ON THE DOUBLE, TORO!

RUPERT [illegible]...

MARKHAM 205 CLIFF-SIDE 3 O'CLOCK

MOMENTS AFTER, AT 205 CLIFF-SIDE..

I HAVE NEARLY ALL THE YELLOW SURFACE SCRAPED OFF. THEN COMES THE RED PAINT, AND UNDER THAT- THE ORIGINAL..

IF THIS PAINTING'S WHAT YOU SAY IT IS, I'LL BUY IT.

THERE! AN ORIGINAL BY THE FAMED ITALIAN ARTIST DELISSE!

I'LL TAKE IT, AND ANY OTHERS YOU SMUGGL.... I MEAN HAD BROUGHT INTO THIS COUNTRY..

WON'T DO! NO SALE!

THE TORCH! GET MOVING!

YES.. MOVING TO HEADQUARTERS!

RAMSEY'S BROKEN AWAY!

THE FLEEING CRIMINAL MAKES HIS DASH OF FREEDOM TOWARD AN OPEN WINDOW - BUT....

I'LL DIVE IN - AND MAKE FOR MY BOAT..

GULP!

NO USE, RAMSEY! YOU'RE BETWEEN FIRE AND WATER!

NOT LONG AFTER - AT HEADQUARTERS

WHITE STOLE A NUMBER OF MASTER PIECES WHEN HE WAS WAR CORRESPONDENT IN ITALY. HE WAS ALWAYS ONE FOR MAKING BIG MONEY...

GO ON! JOACQUILI, HE HIRED YOU, TO REPAINT THE MASTERPIECES?

YES. I WAS IN ITALY THEN.

JOACQUILI MADE THE PAINTINGS LOOK LIKE CHEAP HACK WORK. IN THAT WAY, WHITE WAS ABLE TO GET THEM THROUGH THE CUSTOMS AND INTO THIS COUNTRY.

AND YOU SOLD THEM TO UNSCRUPULOUS CLIENTS, LIKE MARKHAM.

WHAT ABOUT WHITE? WHY WAS HE KILLED?

HE WANTED TOO BIG A CUT IN THE SALES. SO JOACQUILI DID THE JOB ON HIM.

TAKE THEM AWAY, MEN!

JOACQUILI! I WANT TO BE SURE ABOUT THIS PAINT BUSINESS. THE ORIGINAL HAD A WHITE HOUSE, YOU PAINTED IT RED...

WHEN I CAME TO THE SEA-SHORE, I THEN DECIDED IT LOOKED BETTER GREY, BUT I USED SUCH CHEAP PAINT, THE SALT SPRAYS TURNED IT YELLOW OVERNIGHT...

I SAW THE HOUSE IN ITS RED STAGE - YOU SAW IT WHEN IT TURNED YELLOW. WE BOTH WERE RIGHT!

IF WE DIDN'T HAVE THAT ARGUMENT, WE'D HAVE MISSED UP ON THIS CASE!

WISH I COULD MISS UP ON SOMETHING MY WIFE THROWS!

THE END

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

JIM STEVENS plodded through the woods, seething inwardly. He couldn't seem to pull himself together. He had just come from Gary Kellogg's house, and Kellogg's leering tones still rang in his ears.

"You're plumb out o' luck, Stevens," Kellogg had sneered. "That tract o' land ain't yours no more! You hadn't ought to let your taxes mount up, and you wouldn't have lost it."

All of which was absolutely true, Stevens was forced to admit to himself. But on the other hand, it had been the poorest trapping season Whitcomb County had known. It wasn't that Jim and his wife, Molly, had thrown their money to the winds rather than pay taxes; it was just that there hadn't been any money coming in at all.

Dusk was falling as Jim broke his way through the snow-covered underbrush toward the path that led to his cabin. Molly would be waiting in there, slow, patient, easy-going Molly, waiting for her Jim to come home to dinner. And Jim couldn't find the words to break the news to his wife—the news that Kellogg wanted them out of the cabin the first thing in the morning. Poor Molly! She was forever looking at the brighter side of things, only this time there was no bright side. Kellogg was known the county over for his sharp dealings, and Jim Stevens was returning home with the knowledge that Kellogg would enforce his new rights to the hilt.

A cheery spiral of smoke was rising from the cabin as Jim neared it. Peering out the window, an anxious frown scoring her face, was Molly. Her face brightened as Jim entered.

"You're late, Jim. And you must be starving. I've had dinner waiting for an hour."

Jim patted his wife's shoulder. "You go ahead without me, Molly. I don't feel much like eatin' right now." Jim crossed to the rocking chair in front of the fire and sat down.

Molly looked over at her husband. "I guess Kellogg said we had to go. I guess there's about as much use tryin' to get mercy out of him as expectin' a mule to sing like a canary bird."

Jim Stevens rose from his chair. Slowly the sense of injustice he'd felt these past few weeks began to grow within him. Normally a calm and passive man, his resentment against Kellogg began to seethe within him. "If I could only get back at him some way," muttered Jim as he paced the room. "There must be some way to even the score."

Molly's blue eyes darkened in concern. "Jim!" she crossed hurriedly over to her husband. "That's no way to speak! Just because Kellogg's done somethin' wrong doesn't mean you've got to spite him."

"But I can't stand the thought of him gettin' away with such a lowdown trick! Another couple of weeks and we'd have had the money for the taxes . . . the tax people were willin' to wait! But they couldn't turn down his offer when he came to them with the cold cash in his fist. They had to abide by the county laws!" Jim's face was purple with rage.

"I know all that," remonstrated Molly. "I know Gary Kellogg's a mean, ornery man. But it isn't for you or me to deal out justice to him, Jim. You know the Arabs always say 'an eye for an eye—and a tooth for a tooth', and someday Kellogg will get paid back for what he's done."

Suddenly Molly broke off. Jim had his hat and mackinaw on and was opening the cabin door.

"Where are you going, Jim?" Molly asked, trying to keep her alarm out of her voice.

"Don't worry, honey—I'm just going down the road a piece to check on the bear trap I set yesterday. If there's somethin' in it, we sure could use it when we set out tomorrow morning." Jim kissed his wife's cheek lightly and was gone before she could reply.

But once outside, his lips set in a grim, thin line. "I couldn't tell Molly, but I can't stand it! I'm goin' over to see Kellogg and throttle him within an inch of his life. He don't deserve to live." And Jim set out for the path by which he had only lately returned to his home.

Plunging through the heavy brush, a half hour later Jim reached Gary Kellogg's door. Straining to gain control over his mounting rage, he knocked at the door.

"Just a minute," a voice called—a strange voice. And a second later, the door opened. There stood Bill Winston, the county tax treasurer.

"Why, Jim," said Winston. "How come you're here? I've been waiting here for Kellogg, but I haven't seen hide nor hair of him. Thought he went over to your place."

"My place?" Jim was taken aback.

"Why, yes. Matter of fact, that's why I'm here. Kellogg

called me about an hour ago. Said he decided he wouldn't wait until tomorow for you to vacate, Jim. He was going right over to your place to tell you you'd have to clear out tonight. It seems you were over to see him this afternoon and he thought he'd been too easy on you."

Winston lit a match, puffed on his pipe, while Jim stared in disbelief. So Kellogg was going to put him out tonight, eh?

Winston broke in on Jim's meditation. "Tell you what I'll do, Jim. Let's go over to your place, face Kellogg and try to reason with him. He may listen to me."

The two men left Kellogg's cabin. A hard snow was driving down. The wind whipped into their faces, cutting their cheeks like an icy lash. For a few minutes they tried to make their way against the storm. Then Jim spoke. He had to shout to be heard.

"Listen, Winston—we'd better go round the long way. The wind isn't so bad in that neck of the woods."

"Okay, Jim. Whatever you say."

So the men pushed on through the back road. It was a brutally cold night, and Jim was sorry he'd ever left his cabin. There was no sense in what he'd planned anyway. He knew that when it came to a showdown, he could never do any man physical harm. And he knew when they ran into Kellogg at his house, he wouldn't even bother to tell him off in front of Molly. Molly hated violence in any form; she couldn't even bear harsh talk.

"I'm licked," thought Jim. "And I may as well take it like a man."

A little later the men had gone the greater part of the way toward Jim's house, when Jim realized that they were just a few yards from the trap he'd set. Might as well have one last look at it and see if he'd gotten himself a bear. But he knew already there'd be none there. That kind of trapping took luck—and his luck had run out, all the way.

Jim led Winston off the path they were taking.

"Where you going?" shouted Winston.

"This'll just take a minute," replied Jim. "Want to have a look at a trap I set."

A few yards farther on, a dark blot of color loomed on the snow-ridden landscape. As Jim's eyes caught sight of it, he felt a surge of inward excitement. It was only a homemade trap he'd rigged up—he hadn't even been able to buy himself the store kind of bear trap—but it had caught him some game!

"Come on," shouted Jim as he led the way to the trap. "Think I've got me a bear!"

Running in his excitement, Jim was soon right at the trap. A gasp of amazement, then horror, escaped his lips. For in the trap, half frozen already, lay the lifeless form of Gary Kellogg, clutched in an inescapable grip by the homemade trap.

"Whew!" Winston was the first to speak. "He—he's dead, all right. He must have gone off the path in this snowstorm and blundered into the trap!"

"Let's get him up to the house," said Jim. "Though it's too late to do anything for him, I guess."

The men released Gary Kellogg's frozen corpse from the trap and fighting their way against the ever-rising wind, carried him to Jim's cabin. Molly shrank back in horror when she realized that he was dead. Then she turned and looked at Jim, and his eyes met hers.

Winston put their unspoken thought into words. "If he hadn't been in such an all-fired hurry to get you off this property, this never would have happened," he said.

Winston was warming his hands by the fire. "Of course," he continued, "there's no earthly reason why you folks can't stay on here now, and maybe find a way of raising that tax money by the spring."

He turned to Jim. "Looks like Kellogg's meanness was your good fortune, Jim. And I can't say that I'm sorry."

But Jim was looking at Molly. And then he said something that Winston was never able to figure out. He said,

"I see what you mean about those old Arabs now, Molly. I sure do!"

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

of The Human Torch published quarterly at Meriden, Conn., for October 1, 1945.

State of New York } ss
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Martin Goodman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of The Human Torch and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Stan Publishing Company, Inc., 330 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y. Editor, Joan Goodman, 330 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y. Managing Editor, Martin Goodman, 330 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y. Business Manager, Martin Goodman, 330 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

Stan Publishing Company, Inc., 330 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y., Martin Goodman, 330 Fifth Ave., N.Y., N.Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) MARTIN GOODMAN

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of September, 1945.

(SEAL) SYLVIA FIEGEN

(My commission expires March 30, 1947.)

SUB-MARINER

THREE PEOPLE ... AND ONE IS A DEADLY KILLER! ... WHICH ONE??? ... WHICH ONE OF THE TRIO STRIKES SILENTLY, STEALTHILY IN THE DARKNESS WITH DEADLY HAND?! ... THE KEEN-WITTED, IRON-FISTED **SUB-MARINER** FINDS HIMSELF HANGING PERILOUSLY ON THE BORDER LINE OF LIFE AND DEATH AS HE PLUNGES INTO THE HAIR-TINGLING CASE OF ...

MURDER IN BLACKOUT!

MIDNIGHT ON A YACHT. LIGHTS SUDDENLY GO OUT... THEN...

LUCKY WE FOUND THESE CANDLES! WHAT HAPPENED?!

GREAT SCOTT!.. OUR HOST, GEORGE WHITAKER, STABBED TO DEATH!!

MUCH LATER, THE POLICE GRILL THE THREE WHO WERE AT THE MURDER SCENE.....

NO USE! WE CAN'T PIN ANYTHING ON THEM!

LOOKS LIKE THIS CASE MAY WIND UP IN THE UNSOLVED FILE!

JUST ONE YEAR LATER, A NOTE ARRIVES FOR MR. BLAKE, ONE OF THE TRIO WHO WAS AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME....

Mr. Blake: You and the others who were present at my father's murder are invited to attend a party on the yacht at 11:30 tonight

Edmund Whitaker

MR. WALTERS, ANOTHER OF THIS GROUP, RECEIVES A SIMILAR NOTE...

WHAT TH... WONDER WHAT ED IS UP TO... ONLY WAY FOR ME TO FIND OUT IS TO SHOW UP!

AND IN THE HOME OF MRS. WHITAKER, WIFE OF THE DECEASED, BETTY DEAN IS BUSY INTERVIEWING WHEN.....

..AS ONE OF SOCIETY'S BEST-DRESSED WOMEN, DO YOU THINK...

BEG PARDON, MA'M. BUT THIS MESSAGE JUST ARRIVED!

MRS WHITAKER READS IT AND....

SHE'S FAINTED!

MMM... THIS SOUNDS INTERESTING! I REMEMBER THAT CASE!

BETTY SEEKS OUT SUB-MARINER.....

...AND EDMUND WHITAKER ISN'T THROWING THIS PARTY FOR FUN! HE VOWED TO FIND THE MURDERER OF HIS FATHER!...HE MAY BE ONTO SOMETHING!

AND I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ME TO GET THE LOW-DOWN FOR YOU!

OH! WOULD YOU PLEASE, PRINCE NAMOR? ...IT MIGHT MEAN A BIG SCOOP FOR ME!...GEE! THANKS!

OH, WELL OKAY!

LATER, NEARING MIDNIGHT, THE YACHT SWIFTLY MAKES ITS WAY OUT TO SEA....

NOW, YOU CAN HAVE IT STRAIGHT!..ONE OF YOU KILLED MY FATHER...YOU, WALTERS, WERE HIS RIVAL AS A CRIMINAL LAWYER...YOU ENVIED HIS SUCCESSFUL CAREER. YOU FELT HE WAS GIVEN BIG CASES YOU OTHERWISE WOULD GET!

THIS IS OUT FAR ENOUGH!..I'LL SET THE COURSE AND WE'LL ALL GO TO THE CLUB SALON!

WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, ED?

YES! WHY HAVE YOU INVITED ONLY US?

AND YOU, MY STEP-MOTHER, YOU MARRIED MY FATHER MAINLY FOR HIS MONEY. AT HIS DEATH YOU COLLECTED QUITE A FORTUNE. REASON ENOUGH TO WANT HIM OUT OF THE WAY!

OH! YOU'VE NO PROOF!

I CAN FIND NO REASON WHY YOU WOULD KILL MY FATHER, BLAKE, BUT YOU'RE A SUSPECT BY VIRTUE OF HAVING BEEN THERE!

MY BOY, I'M AS ANXIOUS AS YOU TO FIND THE MURDERER!

NOW, AS YOU ALL KNOW, I'M A CHEMIST!... IN THE PAST YEAR I HAVE PERFECTED A TRUTH SERUM... I WILL GIVE EACH OF YOU AN INJECTION BEFORE QUESTIONING!... IF YOU LIE, CERTAIN REACTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE...

AT THIS MOMENT...

THERE SHE IS! ANOTHER FEW SECONDS AND I'LL BE ABOARD!

OH, OH, I'VE BEEN SPOTTED!... WONDER WHAT IT IS, FRIEND OR FOE?

WHOOF!" "FOE!"

CRACK!

MIGHT AS WELL START FINDING OUT THINGS RIGHT NOW!

TALK! WHAT WERE YOU DOING ON THAT BOAT?

WE GOT TO STOP THAT! QUICK! THE ANCHOR!

THAT'S GOT HIM!

BAM!

AFTER A FEW MINUTES OF THE COOL UNDER-SEA WATER.....

SOME BLOW! DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'VE BEEN OUT, BUT HAVE TO GET UPSTAIRS FAST!

TOO LATE! THEY GOT AWAY! SOMETHING WRONG ON THE YACHT... THEIR LIGHTS ARE OUT!

SNAP

OH, OH, THERE'S GOINGS ON HERE!

WHAT HAPPENED?! IS IT...

ED WHITAKER'S BEEN KNIFED TO DEATH AND HIS BOTTLE OF TRUTH SERUM SMASHED!

THIS LOOKS LIKE THE MURDERER MAY BE ONE OF YOU!... YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY LOCKED IN HERE UNTIL I INVESTIGATE THE REST OF THE BOAT!

IT'S... IT'S TOO HORRIBLE!

STEADY, MRS. WHITAKER!

THIS FUSE BOX HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH...I'LL HAVE IT FIXED IN A JIFFY!... THAT THUG WHO RAN OUT OF HERE MUST BE IN CAHOOTS WITH THE KILLER!....

THERE!... LIGHTS ON! NOW, WHAT I NEED IS MORE LIGHT ON THE KILLING!.... MMM!... WHAT'S THAT?? SOUNDS LIKE A BOAT!

BETTY(?)!..

THANKS, MR. RIVITUSO!

THANKS YOURSELF, MISS FOR THE FIFTEEN DOLLARS!

I HIRED JOE TO BRING ME HERE! ... TOO CURIOUS TO STAY AWAY, YOU KNOW!... ANYTHING HAPPEN?

ONLY ONE MURDER SO FAR ...ED WHITAKER KNIFED LIKE HIS FATHER!... LET'S SEARCH HIS CABIN!

...AND SO HE INVENTED A TRUTH SERUM, EH?

YES, SMART BOY... AHH!... HERE'S SOMETHING!

AHH!...IT'S ONLY AN EMPTY GLASS SPRAYER!

YES. BUT IT'S EXACTLY LIKE THE ONE THAT WAS FILLED WITH THE SERUM!...AND IT GIVES ME AN IDEA HOW TO BREAK DOWN THE KILLER! LET'S SCOOT BACK TO THE MURDER ROOM!

ED PREPARED THIS EXTRA BOTTLE OF TRUTH SERUM! I'LL TEST EACH OF YOU! INTO THE NEXT CABIN, MRS. WHITAKER! YOU'RE FIRST!

B-B-BUT I'M INNOCENT!

SO AM I!

THIS SERUM WILL REVEAL THE TRUTH! BLAKE AND WALTERS YOU'LL REMAIN LOCKED IN HERE UNTIL YOUR TURN!

ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVE, MRS WHITAKER! ONE INJECTION AND... OH,OH,..COMPANY!

REACHING FOR THE SERUM, EH? WELL HERE'S MY REACH!

CRACK!

BAM!

OW!

NOW, WATER-SPROUT, YOU TAKE ORDERS FROM US OR THE GIRL DIES! GET IT?

I SURE DO! THAT'S OLD STUFF TO ME IN DEALINGS WITH HOOD-LUMS LIKE YOU.' SO, SHOOT YOUR ORDERS!

QUIT SHOOTIN' OFF YER TRAP AN' GIT MARCHIN' ON DECK.' ONE WRONG MOVE AN' YER BABE GOES BACK TO HER CREATOR!

STOP WHERE YA ARE.!..LADIES FOIST!

AND YOU NEXT.' BUT NOT SO YOU'LL KNOW IT.'

MOMENTS LATER, ON THE GUNMEN'S CRAFT..

WHEN HE COMES TO, THOSE CHAINS WON'T HELP HIM.' HA, HA, HA.!'

FIENDS!

TO THE SHACK.' FULL SPEED AHEAD.'

WHILE ON THE YACHT, MRS. WHITAKER HAS REVIVED AND....

GANGSTERS ASSAULTED US AND I THINK SUB-MARINER HAS BEEN KILLED'

KILLED?

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS TO MEDDLERS!

SOON AFTER IN THE MOBSTERS' HIDEOUT, PRINCE NAMOR COMES TO.....

OH, MY HEAD.' NICE MESS, THESE CHAINS!

JUST IN TIME TO GET BUMPED OFF. WATER-BOY! LUCKY WE GOT YOU BEFORE THE BOSS TALKED!

CAN'T BREAK OUT OF THESE CHAINS! I'VE NO STRENGTH LEFT!... BEEN WITHOUT WATER TOO LONG! THERE'S ONLY ONE CHANCE!

GUESS THIS IS IT.' I'M NOT SCARED THOUGH! HAVE TO DIE SOME TIME! ONLY I SURE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE GOT THAT MONEY FIRST!

MONEY? WHAT MONEY?

$100,000... SLIP WILSON, THE BANK ROBBER, DITCHED IT AND I JUST LEARNED WHERE HE HID IT BEFORE STARTING ON THIS CASE!

ONE HUNDRED G'S!... GEE!

IF HE KNOWS WHERE ALL THAT DOUGH IS, WE GOT TO MAKE HIM TALK!

YEAH!.. AND MAYBE HE'S LYING!

THERE'S A WAY TO FIND OUT.' I JUST HAPPENED TO PICK UP THIS TRUTH SERUM. AND WE CAN...

NOW JUST HOLD STILL WHILE I GIVE YOU A SHOT OF THIS STUFF IN YOUR ARM!

THE SEA PRINCE MAKES A SLIGHT MOVE, SMACKS THE VIAL WITH HIS CHAINS AND...

IT'S SPILT ALL OVER HIM!

HE'S BREAKING LOOSE!

HA, HA, HA!.. MY GREEDY CUT-THROATS!' THAT VIAL CONTAINED NOTHING BUT WATER! AND NOW I'M SPILLING YOU!

BIFF!

POP!

SOCKO!

OHH.! SO YOU WOULD KEEP YOUR WORD AND KILL HER.! IF YOU WERE ONLY FAST ENOUGH.!

BANG!

HOW'S THAT, HUMAN FISH? FAST ENOUGH?

LEAVING **SUB-MARINER** UNCONSCIOUS, THE GANG DARTS OUT OF THE SHACK AND....

GET THAT FIRE GOING ALL AROUND.! THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE.!

SUB-MARINER!.. SUB-MARINER.!.. (COUGH!).. OHH.! HE'S GOT TO COME TO OR (COUGH!) WE'LL BURN UP ALIVE..(COUGH!) (COUGH.!)

USING ALL HIS REMAINING STRENGTH, **SUB-MARINER** CRASHES THE FLAMING WALLS TOWARD THE SEA!

WOW.!... THE MURDERERS.!! (COUGH!) BETTY, CAN YOU HOLD ONTO ME WHILE WE CRASH OUT? (COUGH!)...SHE'S ALREADY OUT, POOR KID.! OH, WELL!

SNAP!

AND IN A FEW MINUTES....

DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE OCEAN WATER TO BRING YOU OUT OF IT, BETTY!

NO, BUT IT SURE TASTES LIKE — WELL, IT'S AWFULLY SALTY! DO I HEAR A POLICE SIREN?

WHEEE

ATTRACTED BY THE BLAZE, A COASTAL HIGHWAY POLICEMAN ARRIVES

GOT HERE IN GOOD TIME, OFFICER! WILL YOU TAKE ME TO THE NEAREST COAST GUARD STATION?

S'LONG, BETTY! GOT TO GO FINISH MY JOB!

NOW, MY FINE-FEATHERED FRIENDS! THE GANG'S ALL ROUNDED UP AT THEIR SHACK HIDEOUT... THEY SQUEALED IN THAT HOLE, AND I'M HERE FOR THEIR LEADER, THE MURDERER!

NO! YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME! THIS CAPSULE CONTAINS A HIGH EXPLOSIVE! PUT A HAND ON ME AND I'LL BLOW ALL OF US TO THE PEARLY GATES!

ALL BUT YOURSELF, BLAKE! MURDERERS DON'T GET TO SEE THE PEARLY GATES!

THE NEXT MOMENT....

OHHH!!

THAT WOMAN, AGAIN!

SUB-MARINER TURNS THE KILLER'S OFFGUARD— MOMENT TO ADVANTAGE!

LUCKY BREAK FOR US, BUT NOT SO LUCKY FOR YOU!

BOOM!!

MAYBE THAT CAPSULE DIDN'T KILL HIM! BETTER DO SOME FISHING AND FIND OUT!

IN A FEW SECONDS...

PRINCE NAMOR, IS HE DEAD?

I DON'T THINK SO! WE'LL SOON SEE!

THE MEDIC TAKES A LOOK AT BLAKE!

THERE'S ENOUGH OF HIM LEFT TO HEAL UP FOR THE ELECTRIC CHAIR TO TAKE CARE OF!

GOOD! THAT'S THE WAY THESE KILLERS ARE SUPPOSED TO GO OUT!

THE END!

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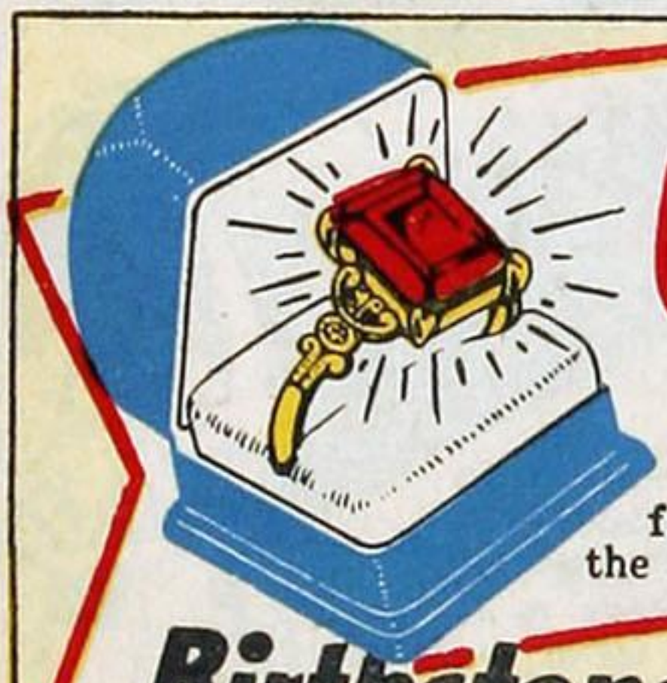

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